b. mixing the coated paramagnetic particles or beads with the cell suspension containing the target-cells;

c. incubating the mixture under gentle rotation;

d. examining the target-cells after incubation; and

e. counting the target-cells after incubation.

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~~43~~. (Amended) A method for detecting a specific living target cell in a cell suspension of a mixed cell population at a sensitivity of one target cell per 100 or more total cells, in a fluid system containing a mixed cell population, or in a single cell suspension prepared from a solid tissue, with the exception of normal and malignant hematopoietic cells in blood and bone marrow, the method comprising the steps of:

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a. coating paramagnetic particles or beads with an antibody or antibody fragment directed against a membrane structure specifically expressed on the target-cell and not on a non-target-cell in the cell mixture;

b. mixing the coated paramagnetic particles or beads with the cell suspension containing the target-cells;

c. incubating the mixture under gentle rotation; and

d. examining the target-cells after incubation.

REMARKS

Claims 17 and 43 have been amended to recite "living target cell." Support for the target cell to be living can be found throughout the specification. Claims 17 and 43 have also been amended to recite a sensitivity of one target cell per 100 or more total cells. Support for such a level of sensitivity can be found at, for example, page 8, lines 16-20 an page 21, lines 13-15. No new matter has been added.

Obviousness Rejections

Widder et al. in view of Connelly

The Examiner rejected claims 17–33 and 41 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over *Widder* et al. in view of *Connelly* for the reasons set forth in paper number 10. Applicants traverse this rejection to the extent that it is maintained.

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